



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council

48 Court Street

Canton, New York 13617

Phone: (315) 379-2292 Fax: (315) 379-2252

E-mail: Planning@stlawco.org

Web Site: <http://www.stlawco.org/Planning/EMC.htm>

Draft

MEETING MINUTES

November 16, 2011 7:00 PM

Room 226, Courthouse, 48 Court Street

Canton, New York

Action items in bold italics

1. **Call to Order:** In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair Peter Skomsky called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

2. **Roll Call, Determination of Quorum:** A quorum WAS present.

Members present included: D. Doe, A. Heidenreich, D. Howard, D. O'Shea, J. Rosales, L. Rudiger, P. Skomsky, A. Soutar, S. Sutherland, B. Zimmerman

Members absent included: T. Cutter, B. Flavin, G. Hart, R. Horst, G. Johnson, D. Katz.

Staff: J. Montan, J. Tenbusch, K. Zimmerman.

Guests: S. Rau.

Press: None.

3. **Hearings, Comments from the Public:** Skomsky introduced Dr. Alex Schreiber, Assistant Professor at St. Lawrence University; Dr. Schreiber's presentation was titled "The Influence of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) on wildlife and human health: Should North Country residents be concerned?"

Schreiber began by describing his field of expertise: he is an endocrinologist; as such he is concerned with the study and functions of hormones in different parts of the body, and with the cells of the endocrine glands and tissues that secrete them. Schreiber primarily studies frogs and fish; these creatures have many of the same genes as humans, and their endocrine systems also have similarities.

Schreiber then described Persistent Organic Pollutants as organic (carbon-based) chemicals that have been manufactured (e.g., plastics, herbicides, pharmaceuticals) or are byproducts or waste products of industrial, residential, pharmaceutical, agricultural processes.

EMC: Everybody Must Care!

Schreiber described several experiments in which a minute concentration of the chemical atrazine (a common weed killer) have been shown to interfere with gonadal development in tadpoles. He noted that studies of human males exposed to high levels of atrazine indicated an increased probability of prostate cancer. Schreiber then asked if POPs might affect human fertility in general; he stated that this is difficult to answer, but noted that there has been a 40% decrease in humans sperm counts during the 20th Century (the era of production and dispersal of POPs).

Schreiber posed several questions:

- *Are there POPs in the North Country?*
 - He answered yes, because: a) there is no place on Earth where POPs have not been detected; and b) many agricultural and industrial chemicals do, or can, release POPs – and the North Country includes agricultural and industrial uses.
- *Should North Country residents be more concerned about POPs compared with other U.S. residents?*
 - He doesn't know; data do not exist to show POP levels in the water or in food products.
- *How might we obtain data regarding POPs in the North Country?*
 - Ask local researchers (government and university labs) to conduct studies on POP levels.
 - Request adequate funding for this research.

In response to questions, Schreiber suggested that concerned persons might take several precautions to limit their cumulative exposure to POPs; these include:

- *Never microwave food or beverages in plastic containers;*
- *Avoid eating animal fats;*
- *Charcoal filters may be effective in reducing POPs in drinking water.*

4. **Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, Items for Unfinished Business:** Tenbusch proposed several items for New Business; the Order of Business was accepted by consensus.
5. **Approval of the Minutes of the July, September, October 2011 Meetings:** Approved (Rudiger, Doe).
6. **Report by the Representative of the Board of Legislators (BOL):** Scott Sutherland reported on recent BOL activities related to the budget review process.
7. **Reports by EMC Members on Conversations with County Legislators:**
 - A. Heidenreich reported having spoken with K. Acres about the North Country Regional Economic Development Council process. She reported that Acres did attend the North Country Symposium at St Lawrence University, whose theme was the NCREDC.
 - D. Doe reported having spoken with J. Putney about the NCREDC and about I-98.
 - B. Zimmerman reported having sent an e-mail message about NCREDC to S. Putman.

8. Report of the Committees:

a. Executive – None.

b. Education – Tenbusch reported that the committee had discussed:

- Staff will work to put together a meeting with Assemblyperson Russell and State Senator Ritchie about issues related to Black Lake.
- The committee discussed the recently-distributed World Health Organization report on “Persistent Organic Pollutants Impact on Child Health”. The Summary of this document (pg. 5) states that “For most people, exposure to POPs comes from the ingestion of food such as fish, meat, and dairy products...” Later in the report (pg. 40): “Families should be encouraged to eat ‘low on the food chain’ increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains when possible. Consumption of meat products low in fat should be encouraged. A diet rich in these foods has additional health benefits such as promoting a healthy weight and blood pressure.” This report is available at:
http://www.who.int/ceh/publications/persistent_organic_pollutant/en/index.html
- The Education committee discussed a proposal to hold a joint meeting with the County Planning Board on Thursday February 9, 2012. This joint meeting might include a presentation by a NYS representative concerning Article X and NYS-directed consideration of siting of wind farms. After a presentation, there might be time for discussion between members of each board; then each board could retire to separate rooms to conduct any other business. By consensus, the EMC agreed to move its February meeting to Feb 9th.
- The 10th annual EMC Winter Camp will take place at Camp Huntington on Raquette Lake over President’s Day weekend (Feb. 17-19). Prices have increased 34% since last year; the committee decided to look at continuing this event, and also other alternatives for future EMC events.
- Committee members made several changes to the 2012 Work Plan.
- Committee members will work over the holiday season to plan an Earth Day event for April 22, 2012. The goal is to have an Earth Day proposal ready to present to the EMC at the January meeting.

c. Natural Resources – Montan reported that the committee had discussed changes to the Work Plan for 2012, including:

- .

d. NYSAEMC –None.

9. Report of the Staff: Tenbusch reported that the North Country Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan has been submitted to Gov. Cuomo. The 10 regional plans will

be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Governor. Project awards based on the plans are anticipated before the end of 2011.

S. Sutherland asked what are the priority projects for St. Lawrence County; Tenbusch reported that there are three:

- A water upgrade project in the Village of Gouverneur;
- A mobile food processing facility;
- Railroad upgrade project for Newton Falls.

10. Unfinished Business: None.

11. New Business: None.

D. Doe asked if there might be able to be provisions for electronic meetings (EMC members to attend via computer / conference call, etc.)? Staff will investigate.

12. Announcements:

- J. Montan announced he has received information about a chunk-wood boiler system; he has information available.
- Chair David Katz announced that he will be resigning from the EMC at the end of the year.
- In response to a question, Tenbusch reported that other EMC members leaving the EMC (their terms will be up at the end of the year, and they have asked not to be reappointed) include Bob Flavin, Glenn Johnson, Jon Rosales.

13. Message to Board of Legislators: EMC members were asked to talk to their assigned legislators about North Country Regional Economic Development Council process.

14. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Thomas Cutter
Secretary

Minutes prepared by J. Montan, J. Tenbusch.

P:\PLANNING\EMC\Minutes\Min 11\Minutes-October 19 2011.doc